

## Collaboration in Haikai: Chōmu, Buson, Issa: An Introduction

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It is common, especially for specialists outside the field of literature, to imagine poetic composition as the product of a single author. That impression is understandable; after all, collections of poetry are assembled, edited, and published in the name of specific individuals. We may also be aware that creation of poetry could be part of a social event – a form of competition. Yet we seldom, if ever, consider the possibility that collaboration extended beyond that which might be implicit in a spontaneous competition.

The essays published here show a variety of ways in which collaboration in haikai poetry extended well beyond the realm of social event or competition.

**Cheryl Crowley** explores the collaborative verse form *haikai no renga* (*haikai* linked verse) as an integral part of the mid-eighteenth-century's "Back to Bashō" movement. In this movement, *haikai* poets, most notably Yosa Buson and his Yahantei school, argued for a rejection of commercialized practices which characterized contemporary *haikai* and a return to the ideals of Bashō. The members of the "Back to Bashō" movement made linked verse a cornerstone of their efforts to imitate Bashō and a foundation of their poetic practice. For them linked verse composition was an act of resistance to the more popular trends of the day, a marker of solidarity among poets of different schools who shared the same goals, and was central to their efforts to reclaim *haikai* from the status of a game and return it to the standards set for it by Bashō. Professor Crowley discusses the Yahantei school linked verse composition, *Susuki mitsu* (Having seen miscanthus) from *Kono hotori* (Around here, 1773). This competition was highly representative of the new style of linked verse that emerged during this period, and it shows how the practice of linked verse composition became a way to reify the ideals of the "Back to Bashō" movement.

**Toshiko Yokota** explores collaboration in the context of a competition among poetry schools for prestige. As the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu notes, those who are engaged in cultural production attempt to advance their positions in the cultural field, competing for cultural legitimacy. No author produces his works alone – he creates them as part of social space, a space that comprises various fields of struggle. In the case of the poet-painter, Yosa Buson, friends and students in his *haikai* group also participated in his literary and artistic production, competing and collaborating for advancement of their position within the field.

In particular, Professor Yokota focuses on Buson's relationship with his student Takai Kitō (1741-89) to show the ways that they accumulated cultural capital and promoted shared aesthetic values. Buson and Kitō collaborated in producing linked verse – still an important genre during this period. Kitō also collaborated with Buson in helping to promote his teacher's paintings. The analysis of Buson's two-fold practice as a poet-painter indicates that his *haikai* network overlapped with his painting network and that he collaborated with his student-patrons in both fields. In the case of his leading student, Takai Kitō, their collaboration is evident in (a) Buson's giving Kitō opportunities to edit the group's anthologies, (b) Buson's writing prefaces for Kitō's works, (c) Buson's composing *haikai* linked verse with Kitō and (d) Kitō's role as a middleman to support Buson's practice as a painter, and show that the two reciprocated and enhanced their economic, cultural, and symbolic capital through their collaboration.

The *haikai no renga* (*haikai* style linked verse) sequences of Kobayashi Issa (1763–1827) are the focus of **Scot Hislop's** essay. These poems have not received much scholarly attention even though they formed an important part of Issa's poetic practice. There are some 250 sequences extant in which he participated. Many of the best of these were composed in a comparatively elegant style with poets like Natsume Seibi (1749–1816). Here Mr. Hislop examines the *Tobi hiyoro* sequence composed in 1815 by Issa and Kawahara Ippyo (1771–1840), the poet who most resembled Issa in terms of style of composition and choice of topics. In this sequence, Issa and Ippyo collaborated in seeking new poetic space outside the confines of

the increasingly clichéd Shōfū style (the style produced by An'ei and Tenmei [1772–1789] period poets). He examines some of the techniques they used in this collaboration and will argue that their joint efforts constituted a viable alternative to the stylized sequences of their contemporaries.

Finally **Scott Lineberger** takes up the *Illustrated Biography of Bashō the Elder* (*Bashō-ō ekotoba den*), completed in 1792 and presented to Gichūji Temple, where Bashō is buried. It was the first complete biography of Bashō, tracing his life from his early years in Iga, through his numerous journeys and concluding with a remarkably detailed record of his final days. The creative force behind this scroll was the Kyoto literati monk Goshōan Chōmu. The work consists of three scrolls including paintings by Kano Shōei alternated with a text handwritten by Chōmu. The text portrays Bashō as a poet who was inspired by a profound understanding the Buddhist concept of impermanence to conduct a life of poverty and wandering. While this interpretation is only loosely based on fact, it fundamentally influenced the subsequent reception of Bashō's work and his canonization.

Lineberger analyzes the unusual collaborative effort that led to the creation of this scroll. As a picture scroll, this text embodies the synergy produced by the collaboration between writers and painters. Moreover, while Chōmu compiled the text, he should not be described as the author, because the text is based almost entirely on Bashō's journals and the writings of his disciples. A close reading and analysis reveals that Chōmu skillfully weaves together the fictional writings of Bashō with the biographical writings of Bashō's disciples and a few words of his own, creating a remarkable collaboration with poets who lived a century earlier.